Tea Tasting Terminology

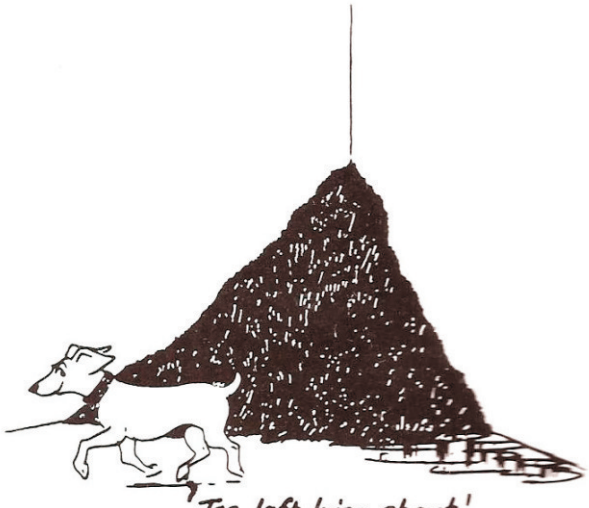
TERMS DESCRIBING DRY LEAF

BLOOM	A sign of good manufacture and sorting(where the reduction of leaf has mainly taken place before firing). A "sheen" which has not been removed by over-handling or over-sorting.
BLACK	A black appearance is desirable, preferably with "bloom': This term is used with Orthodox or Rotorvane manufacture.
BLACKISH	This is a satisfactory appearance for CTC and LTP manufacture teas, and denotes careful sorting.
BROWN	A brown appearance, with CTC and L TP manufacture, normally reflects too hard treatment of the leaf.
BOLD	Particles of leaf which are too large for the particular grade.
CLEAN	Leaf which is free from fibre, dust or any extraneous matter.
STOCK & FIBRE	Should be minimal in primary or top grades, but generally unavoidable in the lower grades at an assortment.
GRAINY	Describes well made CTC or L TP primary grades, more particularly Dusts.
EVEN	True to the grade and consisting of pieces of leaf of quite even size.
UNEVEN & MIXED	"Uneven" pieces of leaf usually indicative of poor sorting and not true to the particular grade.
FLAKY	Flat, open and often light in texture.
GREY	Caused by too much abrasion during sorting.
LEAFY	Orthodox manufacture leaf tending to be on the large or long side.
LIGHT	A tea light in weight and of poor density. Sometimes flaky.
MAKE	Well made (or not) and must be true to the grade.
NEAT	A grade having good "make" and size.
NOSE	Smell of the dry leaf.
CHOPPY	Orthodox (or Rotorvane) manufacture leaf which has to be cut by a "breaker" during sorting.
CHESTY	Inferior or unseasoned packing materials cause this taint.
POWDERY	Fine light dust.
TIP	A sign of fine plucking and apparent in the top grades' of Orthodox manufacture.
WELL TWISTED	Applicable to Orthodox manufacture. Often referred to as "well made" or "rolled' and used for describing whole leaf grades.

TERMS DESCRIBING INFUSED LEAF

BRIGHT	A lively bright appearance. Usually indicates bright liquors
DULL	Lacks brightness and usually denotes a poor tea. Can be due to faulty manufacture and firing, or a high moisture content.
GREEN	Caused by under-fermentation, or characteristic of leaf from immature bushes (liquors often raw or light)
MIXED OR UNEVEN	Leaf of varying colour
AROMA	Smell or scent denoting “inherent character”; usually at high elevations.

'Individual tasters have their own expressions, not necessarily widely used.'



'Tea left lying about'

TERMS DESCRIBING LIQUORS

BRISK	The most "live" characteristic. Results from good manufacture.
BRIGHT	Denotes a lively fresh tea with good keeping quality.
COLOURY	Indicates useful depth of colour and strength.
CHARACTER	An attractive taste when describing better high elevation growth, and peculiar to origin.
FLAVOUR	A most desirable extension of "character" caused by slow growth at high elevations and comparatively rare.
STRENGTH	Substance in cup.
QUALITY	Refers to "cup quality" and denotes a combination of the most desirable liquoring properties.
CREAM	A precipitate obtained after cooling.
FULL	A good combination of strength and colour.
PUNGENT	Astringent with a good combination of briskness brightness and strength. (More related to best quality North Indian teas).
DRY	Indicates slight over-firing.
HIGH-FIRED	Over-fired but not bakey (or burnt).
BAKEY	An over-fired liquor.
BURNT	Extreme over-firing.
DULL	Not clear, and lacking any brightness or briskness.
FRUITY	Can be due to over-fermentation and/or bacterial infection before firing. An over-ripe taste.
EARTHY	Normally caused by damp storage. A taste which can at times be "climatically inherent" in leaf from certain origins.
GONE OFF	A flat or old tea. Often denotes a high moisture content.
HARSH	A taste generally related to under-withered leaf.
LIGHT	Lacking strength and any depth of colour.
GREEN (or RAW)	An immature character. Often due to underfermentation (and sometimes under-wither).
PLAIN	A liquor which is "clean" but lacking in the desirable characteristics.
COARSE	Fibre content.
BAGGY	A taint normally resulting from unlined hessian bags.
FLAT	Unfresh, (usually due to age).
SMOKY	Mainly caused by leaks around the dryer heating tubes.
SOFT	The opposite of briskness and lacking any "live" characteristic. Caused by inefficient fermentation and/or firing.
STEWED	A soft liquor with an undesirable taste Caused by faulty firing at low temperatures and often insufficient air flow.
THIN	An insipid light liquor which lacks any desirable characteristics.
WEEDY	A grass or hay taste related to under-withering.
TAINTS (in general)	A character or taste which is "foreign" to tea.

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